

Dr. Peterson

Ray C. Anderson Center Naming Celebration

2:45 p.m. Monday, March 30, 2015, Scheller College of Business, Suite 4426

Welcome to the naming celebration for the Ray C. Anderson Center for Sustainable Business, formerly known as the Center for Business Strategies for Sustainability. We thought it would be fitting to get together and celebrate the legacy of Ray Anderson, a proud Georgia Tech graduate who championed the notion of “doing well by doing good.”

Before we do that, I’d like to recognize some of our honored guests today. John Lanier, Ray’s grandson, is the Ray C. Anderson Foundation executive director. Ray’s daughters, Mary Anne Lanier and Harriett Langford, are also here today. And we’re very happy to have an official from the Kendeda Fund, trust manager Barry Berlin.

First, a little history. The center was kick-started in early 2013 by a generous three-year grant from the Ray C. Anderson Foundation. And then, as often happens, one good deed led to another. The Kendeda Fund saw an opportunity to expand the cross-section of business and sustainability, so it also made a generous grant to the Center with the motivation of advancing values that sustain our planet.

A couple of months ago, the Scheller College received another very generous financial commitment from the Ray C. Anderson Foundation, this time to commemorate Ray’s legacy by putting his name on the Center. It is a fine and appropriate way to honor a man who loved the Institute and so skillfully combined his passion for sustainability and industry that one publication called him “The Greenest Capitalist.”

Ray Anderson was a 1956 honors graduate in Georgia Tech’s School of Industrial & Systems Engineering. He passed his love of Georgia Tech on to his family, even to the next generation. I’m told that he brought his grandson John, an eventual University of

Virginia graduate, to basketball games on campus and taught him the ways of the Yellow Jacket.

Ray's professional path led him to become a manager, then a successful entrepreneur, and finally an inspirational and influential business leader who painted a powerful vision of an industrial enterprise that is not only sustainable, but also restorative.

In 1973 Ray founded Interface, a Georgia-based residential and commercial carpet manufacturer. During his time at Interface, Ray championed the notion of businesses doing well by doing good, including environmental stewardship and sustainability. Have you seen the Foundation's website? It's so bright and positive, just like Ray was. You see big headers such as "Brighten Your Corner of the World" and "We Will Champion a Better World for Tomorrow's Child." That's what Ray did. His foresight and passion really laid the groundwork for this Center.

Ray set big goals. His "Mission Zero" is Interface's promise to eliminate any negative impact it may have on the environment by the year 2020. Ray's vision revolutionized the company and the petroleum-intensive industry of carpet manufacturing.

Thanks to the Ray C. Anderson Foundation's financial assistance, Georgia Tech will train the Ray Andersons of tomorrow to incorporate environmental and societal considerations into their corporate endeavors. We also share Kendeda's vision that the Georgia Tech model will be adopted by other schools, and become the norm in business and environmental education.

Georgia Tech is a leader in sustainability. The Institute has won numerous awards for its sustainability efforts, and we have more than 200 courses spanning every college that have a focus or emphasis on sustainability.

Earlier this month, we introduced our new Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), titled Serve-Learn-Sustain. The QEP is a required component of our reaffirmation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), which every 10 years re-evaluates member institutions to determine whether their accreditation will be renewed. We are now in the final stages of that important process. Serve-Learn-Sustain has the potential to be transformational. Its concepts are already imbedded in the Georgia Tech ethos. As we drive our QEP forward, the Ray C. Anderson Center for Sustainable Business will play a very important role when we work with and for communities to address all aspects of human security, well-being, and health.

I think Ray would approve, don't you?

It's been my pleasure to take part in this wonderful opening event. Now I'd like to introduce Scheller College Dean Maryam Alavi for the next part of our program.